CC-3 - Public Education and Outreach

Benefit/Cost of Reducing CO_2e:

The Utah Energy Efficiency Strategy shows Public Education, with respect to Energy Efficiency, to be extremely cost effective, yielding a $/$CO_2e$ ton of approximately -$70.

Assessment: High Priority. Bin A. 18 out of 22 votes.

Public education and outreach programs can take a variety of forms. Programs should educate the entire public, not just public school students. A combination of state and private funding is needed to implement a successful, statewide education campaign. Partnerships could be formed with other entities, such as utilities and large companies.

Educating the general public, along with businesses, industries, and K-12 grades, will help yield significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Resources invested in public education and outreach can yield a high return, as it can spur people to action, alter habits and influence behavior with respect to energy, energy use, and reducing Utah's carbon emissions. For example, preliminary estimates from Utah's Energy Efficiency Strategy Report show that an effective public education and outreach campaign on energy efficiency has the potential to save 300-400,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year in 2020, while yielding net energy savings of approximately $300 million from 2006-2020.[8]

Arizona and New Mexico identify specific audiences to be targeted, including policymakers, youth, community leaders, and the general public. New Mexico also targets industrial and economic sectors. Colorado is considering establishing an education and outreach committee and outreach coordinator position, holding regular briefings to promote implementation, and adding climate to education performance standards for schools. The Oregon Governor's Advisory Council on Global Warming is developing an education program.

The Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) at the University of Colorado, Boulder works with the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to create programs for K-12 school districts, teachers and students, undergraduates, and other community groups. CIRES has established a K-12 Outreach Program that combines science with innovative teaching practices. Other ongoing projects include classroom and teacher professional development, volunteer opportunities for scientists, education components for research projects, district partnerships, research mentors for high school students and undergraduates, and collections of digital resources for geoscience education project evaluation and for climate change education.[9]

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[8] Gellar, H., S. Baldwin, P. Case, K. Emerson, T. Langer and S.Wright. *Draft Report of Utah Energy Efficiency Strategy: Policy Options*. 21 May 2007.

[9] See http://cires.colorado.edu/education/k12/